

Aug
JULY

1984

Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat

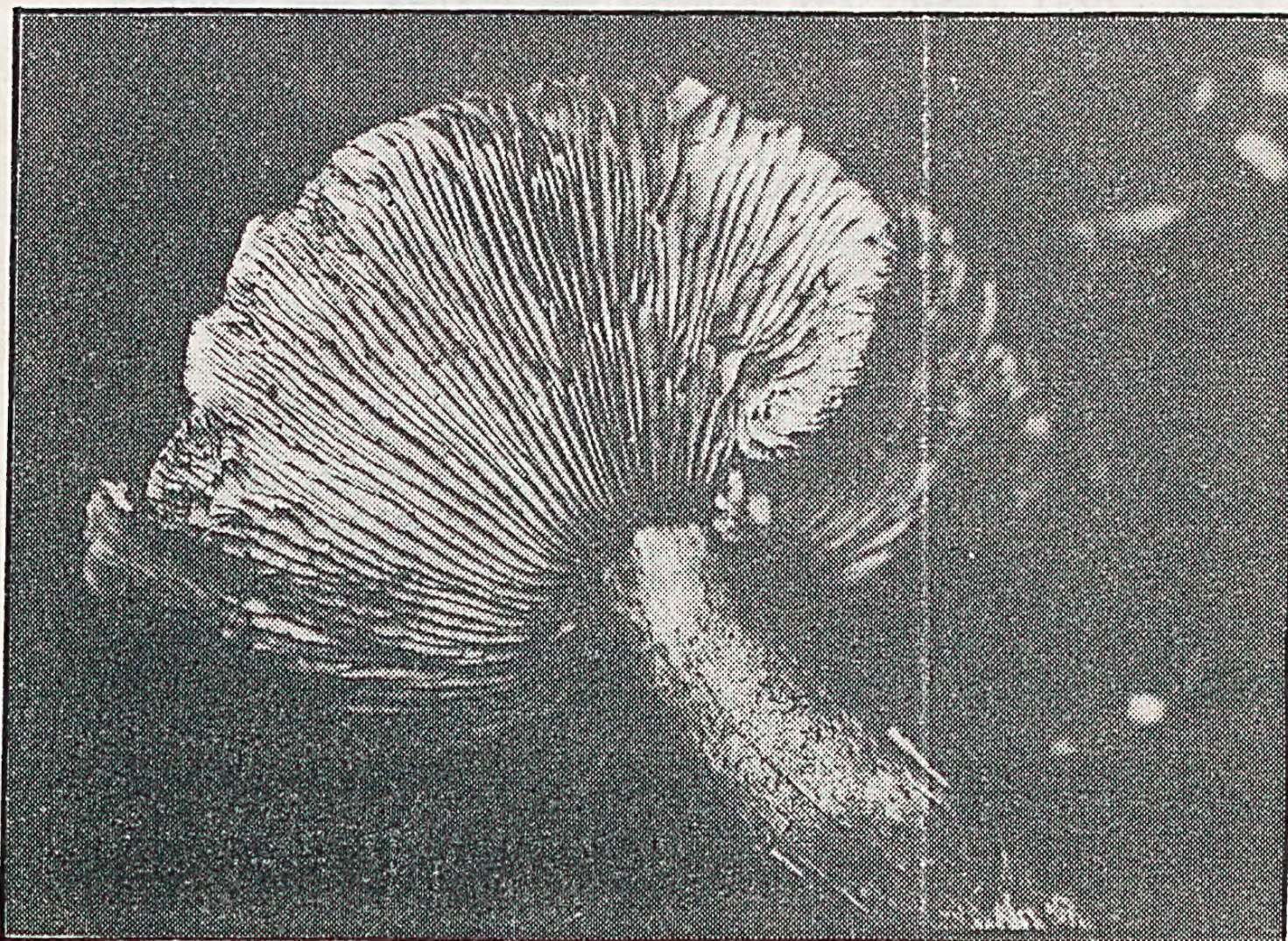
EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

Meeting 3rd August: Mr. A. Hartup - "Natural History
Photography".

Meeting 7th September: Mr. N. Scarlett - "Endangered
Plants".

Excursion 5th August: Hillcrest Uncommitted Area - Miss H.
Burgess.

Excursion 9th September: Inverleigh Common - Mr. E. Errey.



President: Miss H Burgess 312210
Secretary: Miss J Binns 323670
Treasurer: Mrs F Williamson 327631
Editors: Mr G Binns 323670
Mr L Fink 052 861319

Meetings, as specified, are held in the Art
Building of the School of Mines and Industries,
Lydiard Street South, Ballarat, commencing 7.30pm.
EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM
CROCKERS, Cnr. STURT and ARMSTRONG STREETS,
BALLARAT, AT 9.30 am FOR FULL DAY OUTINGS.
OR AT 1.30 pm FOR HALF DAY.

"PISCATORIAL PICTURALIZATION!"

Seventy percent of the Earth's surface is sea, and, if all the land were levelled in the sea it would still cover the entire world to a depth of $2\frac{1}{2}$ kilometres, yet we know relatively little about it. We are poorly equipped to investigate it and our knowledge has grown very slowly and with difficulty.

The best known is the fringe of the oceans and sadly most of us have contact only when we go to the beach, we observe the action of waves on rocks or sand, we know very little of the wonderful world that abounds there.

The film we saw on Micro Marine Biology only touched part of the life there, but it was fascinating and entirely different.

The Estuarine Life.

Coastal wetlands around the world abound with a multitude of birds mainly waders, wild ducks, birds of prey and smaller birds are often present.

These estuarine areas with their salt marshes are in fact some of the most important wildlife refuges, especially as stopping places for migrants and even wintering places. They abound in crabs and other Crustā'cea, and an abundance of other life including insects.

Mangrove swamps are havens for large numbers of birds. In addition to food they provide shelter

and nesting sites; herons, kingfishers, warblers and honey eaters are all found here.

Mangroves have a curious root system to allow for "breathing" and many small crabs, shrimps and others live among these roots which are exposed at low tide.

These Estuarine Wetlands are an amazing and fascinating area; they are very important as one of the most productive habitats on Earth.

Our third film was Butterfly Fish.

These are among the most beautiful of our fish with miriads of them around any coral reef, they are beautifully marked. Some feed on Plankton, and these are the most numerous of them. Others feed on minute plant life amid the coral and on it, while others feed on the coral itself.

Some have territories and are very aggressive and chase intruders away; others, like the Plankton feeders are more placid.

These were a well selected series of films and our thanks go to Dr Frank Harrap.

Lyndsay.

Reports from June Meeting

H. Hooper - Large flocks of Ibis over the Gong
Gong reservoir

M. Faulds - Cattle Egrets are still in the Magpie
area, together with Ibis.

PTEROSTYLIS

Found in the Ballarat area.

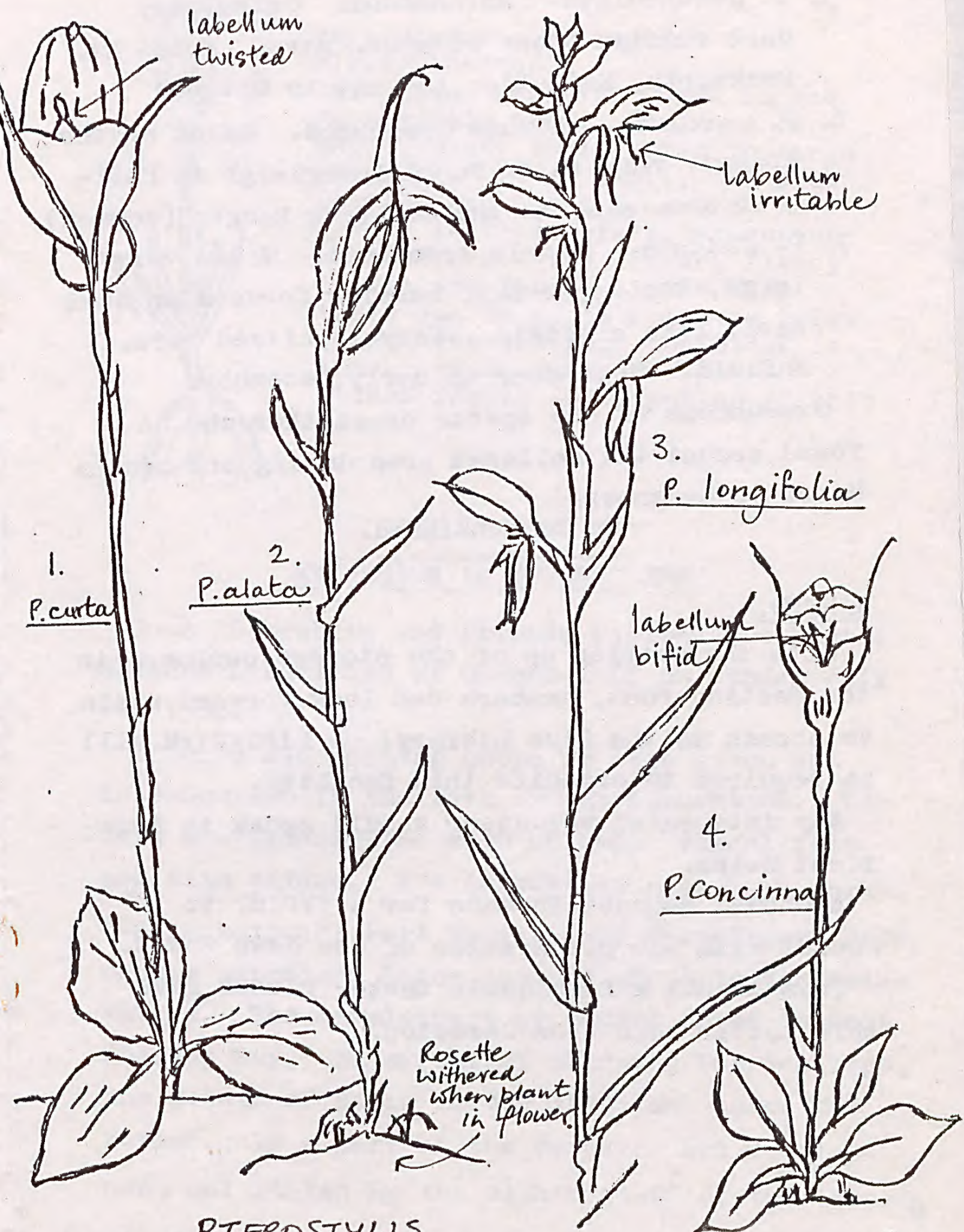
A seasonal feature on the Greenhood orchid group, prepared by the late Stella Beddgood for the news-sheet eight years ago, will be included for members reference in two segments, commencing this issue.

PTEROSTYLIS Greek: PTERON, a wing, STYLOS, a column. Flowers conspicuously hood shaped, green or reddish, pedunculate, dorsal sepal and lateral petals cohering for their whole length, labellum relatively small and mobile with a basal append-

age.

1. *P. curta* (illustrated). Blunt Greenhood.
Labellum twisted. Rare, found Mt. Beckworth, Enfield. July to August.
2. *P. alata* (illustrated). Striped Greenhood.
Galea up to 2.5cm, whitish or grey green with reddish brown stripes. Isolated occurrences, found Mt. Beckworth, Enfield. May to July.
3. *P. longifolia* (illustrated). Tall Greenhood. -
Leaves narrow protruding from stem. Flowers erect. Widely distributed in all areas.
Late winter to early spring. July to September
4. *P. concinna* (illustrated). Is not found close to Ballarat but occurs in Brisbane Ranges, Ararat and the Grampians. It is smallish but easily recognised by the cleft labellum, thereby it cannot be confused with *P. nana* (Aug. Sep)

over



PTEROSTYLIS

5. *P. pedunculata*. Maroonhood. Galea very dark reddish brown at apex. rare. Found Mt. Beckworth, Enfield. August to October
6. *P. revoluta*. Autumn Greenhood. Galea scythe shaped. very rare. Found Inverleigh in Ballarat area also in the Brisbane Ranges (common).
7. *P. falcata*. Sickle Greenhood. Galea very large, the upper half curving forward and downward, like a sickle. Very localized rare. Enfield. September to early December.

Greenhoods of one specie or another can be found around the Ballarat area during the months March to December.

To be continued.

WANTED.

With the setting up of the storage cupboard in the meeting room, members can look forward again to access to the Club Library. A LIBRARIAN will be required to organize this facility.

Any interested volunteer should speak to President Helen.

A renewed request is made for a TYPIST to assist with the preparation of the News Sheet.

This is not a formidable task-- please give this matter some consideration.



Phyloglossum drummondii

Pigmy Clubmoss

This plant has been found in the Smythesdale area. It grows in moist, peaty soil, often in large colonies. It is small, the club (strobilus) about 5-8mm, on an erect, leafless stalk, measuring about 2.5cm. The linear, fleshy leaves are tufted at the base - there can be up to 6 leaves 1-2cm long. The tuberous rootstock is increased annually.

Please report any sighting of this plant.

EXCURSION to QUEENSCLIFF

Some 25 members and friends visited the Marine Science Laboratories at Queenscliff on Sunday July 8th 1984.

After a mid morning cuppa we were given an introduction to the work at the laboratories. The talk was illustrated with an audio visual film and with slides. The laboratories have been working in both the Port Phillip and Westernport Bays, on the Gippsland Lakes and off shore in Victorian waters. The development of mussel farms in Port Phillip Bay, the effect of dredging for Scallops, the growth of Bream in the Gippsland Lakes had formed only a part of the research and development undertaken by the eighty staff of the laboratories.

Other areas investigated are the pollution levels on or off the Bay's Beaches and the large scale disappearance of the marine grass, *Lostera* in Westernport Bay.

we saw at first hand the small oysters stacked in wine trays in a seawater tank, which only a few days before our visit had been featured on T.V. radio and the press.

They herald the start of a project for the establishment of a large number of oyster farms in Port Phillip Bay.

The only occupant of a large aquarium was a newly arrived blue ringed octopus which was moving stealthily along the back wall of the tank; the blue rings look quite attractive. Other tanks held a variety of colourful fish and some massive crabs.

In the afternoon most of the group went bird watching on Swan Island. We saw something over thirty species of water and landbirds, a feature being the very large numbers of whitefaced herons.

A small flight of bartailed godwits was a good sighting as was a solitary royal spoonbill feeding in a small pool.

Flame robins white fronted chats and several thornbill species with the occasional wren.

A spiny cheeked honey eater came as something of a surpris to add to the pleasure of sighting a number of mistletoebirds (mainly females) seen at close range on some of the mistletoe on the acacias.

Frank Harrap.